

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## White House targets gov't workers for wage freeze

BY ANGEL LARISCY

Saying these were times “where all of us are called to make some sacrifices,” President Barack Obama announced a two-year pay freeze for more than 2 million civilian federal workers November 29.

Congress will be asked to give the pay freeze a stamp of approval. Workers were scheduled to receive a 1.4 percent pay increase in 2011.

This will be the first across-the-board two-year pay freeze for federal workers in modern U.S. history. There was a one-year freeze in 1986. Federal workers already face a 7.2 percent increase in health insurance premiums next year and a cut in their transit subsidy by half, amounting to an overall pay cut.

The president's announcement sends a message to workers and farmers more broadly that austerity measures will deepen. And workers will be pressured into accepting cuts in their standard of living as a part of “putting people back to work,” as Obama cynically told the press.

Jeffery Zients, deputy budget director and the government's chief performance officer, said initial savings for

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## U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan double '09

BY DOUG NELSON

November 30—Washington has maintained a constant barrage of aerial drone attacks in parts of Pakistan as it ramps up the imperialist war it leads in Afghanistan, already in its 10th year. So far this year 106 U.S. drone strikes have been reported, double those in all of 2009.

Estimates of the number killed since the first recorded strike in 2004 range from 1,300 to 2,000. As many as 850 have been killed this year, according to the New America Foundation.

Through the drone campaign, Washington has honed its tools and craft of remote assassination, killing scores of leaders of the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other groups waging war against U.S.-led forces. Among those killed are also hundreds of herders, farmers, and other civilians, including women and children.

The drone strikes have been conducted in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of northwest Pakistan, a remote area ruled with an iron fist where residents lack the most elementary rights and legal protections and the media is often restricted.

The area serves as a major base

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## Workers in Ireland protest gov't austerity

Capitalists press wage cuts, layoffs



Rafal Rozalski

Demonstration in Dublin, Ireland, November 27 against government austerity program.

BY CELIA PUGH  
AND ROSE KNIGHT

DUBLIN, Ireland—“We have been on strike since October 26 because 22 of us were made redundant [laid off] after the shop in Dublin was sold,” a young woman working for the Laura Ashley company told the *Militant*. Emma, who did not want to give her last name, said, “We had been told that our jobs were safe.” She carried a placard that said, “Greedy Laura Ashley, walks all over loyal workers.”

The group of young strikers were

part of the march by some 100,000 workers, students, and retirees from around Ireland who braved wintry conditions November 27 to protest the government's recently announced austerity program. This mobilization organized by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) followed a 20,000-strong demonstration of students opposing cuts in education just three weeks earlier.

Hospital porter Brian Condra, 39, told the *Sunday Business Post* that

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## 29 die in New Zealand mine as coal bosses drive production

BY MIKE TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Twenty-nine miners were declared dead after a second methane gas explosion ripped through the Pike River coal mine November 25. The men had not been heard from since the first blast on November 19. The Pike River explosion is the worst New Zealand mine disaster in more than 90 years.

Two other miners who were underground at the time of the explosion, managed to struggle back to the surface and raise the alarm. They were away from the coal face, where the blast occurred, and escaped the full force of its impact.

Authorities prevented miners' rescue crews from entering the mine over the following days because of continuing high gas levels. The crews were disbanded following the second explosion.

After a massive explosion Novem-

ber 28, the mine company owners reported that a coal fire was burning in the mine, and it may have to be sealed.

The following day the New Zealand government announced that it

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## What Kind of Socialism For the 21st Century?

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# Countering antiabortion law, doctor to open clinics

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

DES MOINES, Iowa—Responding to a new Nebraska law that bans abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy, Dr. LeRoy Carhart has announced he will open new clinics in the Midwest and Washington, D.C., to provide more access to abortion.

The Supreme Court ruling in 1973 legalized abortion until the fetus is viable, generally considered to be at 22 to 24 weeks. Supporters of the Nebraska antiabortion law argued that a fetus “feels pain” at 20 weeks.

Carhart is an abortion provider in the greater Omaha, Nebraska, area. He worked for 11 years with Dr. George Tiller, who was murdered in Wichita, Kansas, in May 2009 by antiabortion rightist Scott Roeder.

In a November 10 *Washington Post* interview Carhart said a legal challenge to the newly implemented law is being prepared. “In the meantime, I need a place for women to go,” he said.

Carhart plans to open a new clinic in the Washington, D.C., area December 6, and another sometime soon in Council Bluffs, Iowa, which is near Omaha. He will work with other doctors in expanding operations at his existing clinic in Bellevue, Nebraska, and at a clinic in Indianapolis to offer other reproductive medical treatments.

“We also considered things like being near the Metro and good transportation and access to airports” for women who are forced to travel long distances to obtain an abortion, he

said.

In an interview with the *Militant*, Erin Sullivan, president of the Nebraska chapter of National Organization for Women, said, “It’s a woman’s choice and he’s letting women have their choice by keeping it available.”

Opponents of abortion rights in Iowa have been going after the Iowa Board of Medicine to end Planned Parenthood’s use of its “telemedicine” program.

Mostly women in rural areas use the program, the first of its kind. A nurse examines a woman who wants the abortion pill. Afterward, the woman has a consultation with a doctor in Des Moines via the Internet who determines if she meets the requirements to take the pill. If so, she is provided with it immediately.

Groups like Missionaries to the Pre-Born Iowa, Iowa Right to Life, and Iowans for Life have attended two of the Board of Medicine public hearings to demand an immediate halt to the practice. They are circulating a petition that they say has some 3,900 signatures. The board says the “general issue of telemedicine is being reviewed.”

## Hundreds at Miami fair visit Pathfinder booth



Militant/Deborah Liatos

Hundreds of people stopped at the Pathfinder Books booth at the Miami International Book Fair, November 19–21. A total of 103 books as well as 37 subscriptions to the *Militant* were sold. The best seller was *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, with 33 copies sold. Other top sellers were *The Communist Manifesto*, *Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*, and *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?*

One Cuban woman stepped into the booth and exclaimed, “Ah, here is the only place you can get the truth about Cuba.” A young Nicaraguan woman bought three books on the Nicaraguan revolution because she wanted to know how the revolution dealt with the question of women’s rights.

—BERNIE SENTER

## Official inflation is flat; food, energy prices rise

BY ANGEL LARISCY

The U.S. Labor Department announced inflation has fallen to its lowest level since the agency began keeping records in 1957. The department says when food and energy are disregarded, inflation in the last year

was only 0.6 percent.

For working people these figures have little to do with what most affects their lives—food, energy, and housing costs.

In the last year gasoline prices rose 9.5 percent and overall energy costs increased 5.9 percent. Beef prices are up 5.7 percent and pork 10 percent from last year, while eggs rose 11.3 percent, milk 6.5 percent, and butter 19.1 percent.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported 14.7 percent of all households in the country were “food insecure” in 2009. The number adds up to 17 million working-class families, but the USDA gives no figure for the number of people. Currently one in four households in the United States has at least one family member who is enrolled in a USDA food subsidy program. Two years ago

the number was one in five.

The Capital Area Food Bank’s president told the *Washington Post* it is facing the most difficult year in the 30 years it has existed. The food bank plans to distribute 30 million pounds of food this year—up from 27 million last year.

At the Arlington Food Assistance Center in Virginia, many seeking help have jobs. L. Saba Bekele, who is employed as a shuttle van driver, waited more than an hour for her weekly groceries and then gave her turkey to the woman behind her in line who had a larger family.

Wanda Wittenburg, a caregiver in a senior living facility, made her first visit to a food pantry. Her rent doubled this summer when her son turned 18 and she was no longer eligible for a housing voucher.

## THE MILITANT

### Imperialist troops out of Afghanistan!

*U.S.-led forces are intensifying combat operations in southern Afghanistan. The ‘Militant’ takes a side calling for all imperialist troops out of the country now. Read the ‘Militant’ to keep abreast of the latest developments in this nine-year-long war.*



Australian supply convoy from Kandahar to base in Uruzgan Province in Afghanistan.

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# Unionists in Australia celebrate labor victory

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—In a victory for the labor movement, building worker Ark Tribe was acquitted November 24 of charges stemming from federal antiunion laws. He was facing up to six months in jail.

Tribe was the first unionist charged under coercive powers given to the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC). He had failed to attend a compulsory interrogation by this government agency about a meeting in 2008 when workers stopped work to discuss demands over worksite safety.

An Adelaide magistrate delivered the not guilty verdict on a technicality over who issued the summons.

Tribe's workmates and other supporters, as well as the media, packed the courtroom and hallway. Outside the court, thousands of unionists rallied in a show of support. A union campaign of stoppages and rallies involving tens of thousands of unionists defending Tribe and calling for abolishing the ABCC preceded the hearing.

Addressing the rally, Tribe said, "We've just won one part of the war, but we've got the battle to continue." He declared he would fight to defend other workers facing similar charges.

The ABCC's power to compel workers into interviews without legal representation was not challenged by the court's decision.

ABCC chief Leigh Johns responded that the continued use of these powers is "regrettably necessary" due to the "ongoing level of industrial unlawfulness" in the construction industry.

In a related development, the ABCC has threatened prosecution of building workers and their unions at Thiess construction sites in Victoria, Queensland, and New South Wales for an "unlawful" five-day sympathy strike. The workers were supporting a walkout by fellow unionists at Thiess's construction site for the Wonthaggi desalination plant in Victoria. The company hired professional strikebreaker Bruce Townsend to

organize infiltration of the workforce there, spying on employee activities and disruption of any union action.

Townsend has a long history of serving employer and government antiunion attacks: against a 1992 strike at the APPM pulp mill in Burnie, Tasmania; on the meat workers union in 1999 at G&K O'Connor, the state of Victoria's biggest export abattoir; and against the Maritime Union of Australia in 1998 during the national waterfront lockout.

The workers agreed to return to work after Thiess removed two of its top managers at the Wonthaggi site blamed for hiring Townsend.

## 29 coal miners die in New Zealand explosion

Continued from front page

was establishing a royal commission of inquiry into the disaster. Prime Minister John Key said that the future of underground mining in New Zealand would rest on the findings of the commission.

The Pike River mine is in the Paparoa mountain range, 30 miles northeast of Greymouth on the west coast of New Zealand's South Island. The region has been the center of coal mining in this country for more than a century. Work sites and schools there will close December 2 for a public memorial meeting. Those killed range in age from Joseph Dunbar, 17, working his first day at the mine, to 62-year-old Keith Valli.

The coal seam being mined at Pike River contains high levels of potentially explosive methane gas. A mine engineer with connections to the miners at Pike River said company procedures were inadequate to address this problem, and pointed to a number of incidents where methane gas readings reached high levels in the past 12 months.

Marty Palmer, who had just finished the morning shift, told his son Brendon as he passed him entering the mine that there were gas problems.

Brenda Rackley, partner of John Hale, another miner who perished, told reporters that friends and relatives



Ark Tribe, right, emerges from court November 24 with union official after charges were dropped stemming from federal antiunion laws. Thousands gathered in a show of support.

could not understand how the men had died in a mine less than two years old.

"I can't get it around my head that they had the best technology in the world . . . how this could happen."

Rackley said her partner had often expressed concern about the mine's safety. She hoped the inquiry would investigate near misses and other safety incidents in the mine's history.

Rising demand for high quality coking coal for steel production in China and India has led to a profit-driven push to accelerate coal production over recent years. Pike River is a new company that began production last year.

Responding to a growing number of incidents in New Zealand mines over recent years, the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union, which organizes coal miners, has been calling for the return of mine inspectors. The inspectors are on site at all times during mine production and check safety before the start of each shift. The practice was ended two decades ago.

Following the death of two coal miners on the west coast in 2006, a Department of Labour review proposed increased mining regulations and a return to union-elected check inspectors.

That proposal was opposed by min-

ing companies and the government. Mine companies said it would create a confrontational management style. Among the opponents was the Pike River Mining Company, which said in a submission on the 2008 report that check inspectors were "totally inappropriate and not required."

Seventy-year-old retired miner Jim O'Donnell told the *New Zealand Herald* that there had been a dumbing down of safety measures since his time on the job. He had been one of those elected by union co-workers as a check inspector. If the men had safety concerns they would go to him and he could go to the chief inspector, who could shut the mine. The crucial part of this process was the independence from the company, he said.

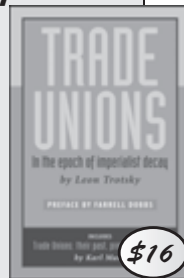
### Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky

Features: "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future" by Karl Marx

Introduction by Farrell Dobbs

PathfinderPress.com



## Temporary workers walk out at Hyundai in South Korea

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

According to the November 23 *Korea Times* temporary workers at Hyundai Motor's assembly lines in Ulsan have been on strike since November 15, demanding they be put on the permanent payroll. After one worker set himself on fire in protest, the Korea Metal Workers' Union, which Hyundai's permanent employees belong to, declared that it would go on a nationwide strike in early December, if the company didn't start negotiations with temporary workers by the end of November.

Hyundai, which is South Korea's largest automaker and whose share price has risen 49 percent this year, is now facing the prospect of a united strike by workers at a time when sales have been increasing, particularly in the U.S. market.

The strike involves 600 workers. One assembly line occupied by the strikers has been closed and the company has sued 27 strike leaders, claiming that collective action for permanent employment is prohibited under Korean labor laws. More than 20 workers were in-

jured and 50 arrested at the beginning of the occupation after Hyundai called in riot police using tear gas in an attempt to end the strike.

"Hyundai Motor should stop violence towards us," the striking employees said in a statement. "If you [Hyundai Motor] want to solve this problem in a peaceful way, you should show up at the negotiating table to talk about giving us permanent jobs."

The walkout follows a Supreme Court ruling July directing the automaker to hire temporary employees who have worked at the plant for more than two years.

Hyundai has about 8,200 contract workers—22 percent of its total workforce. The company claims that any concession will lead to the wholesale conversion of the workers' status and cost the automaker dearly.

This struggle has ramifications not only at Hyundai, but at all other companies where temporary workers are increasingly employed in South Korea.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### Los Angeles

**From Venezuela to the U.S.: The Fight to Build a Revolutionary Working-Class Leadership Today.** Speakers: Eleanor Garcia, former Socialist Workers Party candidate for Los Angeles City Council and participant in Venezuela International Book Fair; Dave Prince, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sat., Dec. 11. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**U.S. Hands Off North Korea! Support the Korean People's Fight for Reunification.** Speaker: Laura Anderson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 10, 8 p.m. 3557 S. Archer Ave. (Orange line to 35th and Archer). Tel.: (773) 890-1190.

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

**Reaching to the World: Discussions at the Venezuela International Book Fair on the Crisis of Capitalism and the Possibility of Socialist Revolution.** Speaker: Maggie Trowe, participant in Venezuela book fair. Sat., Dec. 11. Program, 5 p.m., followed by dinner and party. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 255-1707.

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

**Hands Off North Korea!** Speaker: Representative, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. (take #7 or #9 bus to Orcas St. Walk two blocks south). Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**U.S. Hands Off North Korea!** Speaker: Representative, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 143 Kennedy St. NW, Suite 15. Tel.: (202) 536-5080.

### CANADA

#### Montreal

**Haiti's Underdevelopment Is the Result of Decades of Imperialist Plunder and Domination.** Speakers: Michel Dugré, Communist League; others to be announced. Fri., Dec. 10, 8 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**Hands Off North Korea!** Speaker: Felicity Coggan, Communist League. Fri., Dec. 10, 7 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Rd. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.



# Twin Cities exhibit by one of Cuban 5 draws students

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

MINNEAPOLIS—Field trips by art students from North High School and social studies students from Plymouth Christian Youth Center Arts & Technology High School (PCYC) capped the activities around a month-long exhibit of artwork by Antonio Guerrero here, one of five Cuban revolutionaries locked up in U.S. prisons on trumped-up charges. In all 25 students attended the exhibit, 10 from PCYC and 15 from North High School.

“Before we knew nothing about the Cuban Five,” said Stephen Young, dean of students at PCYC. “Now I am aware of their struggle.” Young said he would like to help put together a program on the Cuban Five at his school.

The exhibit, titled “From My Altitude,” was shown at Homewood Studios, a street level art gallery in the heart of the Black community in North Minneapolis.

The art show featured 30 works by Guerrero, who learned to paint and draw from fellow inmates in Florence, Colorado, where he has been incarcerated for most of the past 12 years. Guerrero, along with the other four Cubans—Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González—were convicted on frame-up charges, including “conspiracy to commit espionage” and, in the case of Hernández, “conspiracy to commit murder,” and received long prison sentences.

Known internationally as the Cuban Five, these revolutionaries were arrested in September 1998 in Miami. The five had been gathering information on right-wing Cuban exile groups in Florida that have a long history of carrying out violent acts against the Cuban Revolution, with the complicity of the U.S. government.

Guerrero was sentenced to life in prison plus 10 years. On October 13, 2009, his sentence was reduced to 21 years and 10 months, after an appeals court ruled that the sentences of three of the five—Guerrero, Labañino, and Fernando González—were excessive. The reduction in the draconian sentences was an acknowledgement of the pressure put on the U.S. government from the worldwide campaign demanding freedom for the Cuban Five.

The exhibit was sponsored by the Minnesota Cuba Committee and Obsidian Arts, a Black visual arts organization in Minneapolis.

The students were drawn to several of Guerrero’s works. Lapresha Robinson, a student at PCYC, liked the animal drawings, especially the one showing the leopard. “Very imaginative, such detail and lively colors, you see freedom in his eyes,” she said. “The artist must be strong like a leopard.”

Others were struck by Guerrero’s prison paintings—“Prison cell door” and “One day my prison shirt will be left hanging.” The latter one, especially, was commented on. “He’s going to get out one day, isn’t he?” asked one student. Another student liked the pencil drawings of the mothers of the Cuban Five.

The November 5 opening reception drew a crowd of 60 people and was followed a few days later by a “gallery talk,” initiated by George Roberts, the curator and owner of Homewood Studios. Both of these successful events led up to “A Conversation on the Politics of Freedom in Cuba and the U.S.,” attended by 35 people on November 19, a good number learning about the Cuban Five for the first time.

Many of those who came to the events at the studio were from the neighborhood.

To help raise awareness of the campaign to free the Cuban Five, Roberts



Militant/Natalie Morrison

North High School students view paintings by Antonio Guerrero, one of Cuban Five, at Homewood Studios gallery in Minneapolis.

printed one of Guerrero’s poems—“If they help you”—on beautiful card stock. These proved popular at the exhibit. With the help of friends, Roberts translated three poems by Guerrero—“A secure place to stand,” “I am a man,” and “Mother mine”—all found in “From My Altitude,” a book of poems Guerrero wrote while in solitary confinement in Miami following his arrest in 1998. The poems were displayed along with the artwork at the exhibit.

Guerrero, as described in his “Outline

of my artistic development,” learned to paint and draw from fellow inmates. “Each work expresses not only my human essence but that of the Five, united by unbreakable principles,” he wrote. The “outline” along with other educational material was picked up by those who came to the exhibit.

The exhibit has been touring the United States. There have been shows in California, Colorado, Kentucky, New York, Oregon, Washington, D.C., and at the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit.

## White House pushes passage of ‘Dream Act’

BY SETH GALINSKY

After meeting with Latino members of Congress, President Barack Obama pledged November 16 to step up support for the “Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (Dream) Act.” If passed, it would open up the possibility of a green card and citizenship for some young people without papers, if they go to college or join the U.S. military. The bill was drafted by prominent Democratic and Republican politicians with input from the Pentagon.

At the same time, the Obama administration has intensified anti-immigrant measures begun by his Democratic and Republican predecessors, including increased criminalization of undocu-

mented workers. The White House says it wants to “create a pathway for legal status” for some as a way of fixing the “broken immigration system.”

On Thanksgiving eve, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement director John Morton claimed that “ICE continues to target, arrest and remove individuals that come to pursue a life of crime rather than the American Dream.” Under the guise of targeting “criminal aliens” ICE has expanded programs that result in the deportation of hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers.

While cutting back on factory raids, which were unpopular among both foreign and U.S.-born workers, Obama has led a five-fold expansion of immigration “audits,” forcing companies to fire thousands of workers without papers.

Obama has made formal “orders of removal” a central mechanism for deportations, meaning deported workers who return to the United States face the possibility of felony charges for “illegal reentry.”

By clamping down on undocumented workers while holding out the possibility of legalization for some, the U.S. rulers seek to maintain a group of workers with few rights and low pay. Immigrant labor plays a key role in bolstering U.S. capitalists’ edge and profits against their competitors around the world.

Under the Dream Act an estimated 2.1 million undocumented youth and young adults who have lived in the United States at least five years and arrived when they were under 16 years old could be eligible to apply for papers. Only an estimated 825,000, however, would qualify because the bill requires going to college for at least 2 years or serving “honorably” in the U.S. military

for at least 2 years. The bill also requires “good moral character.”

Some proponents of the Dream Act argue that young people who go to college or serve in the U.S. military are more deserving of papers than young workers or older undocumented immigrants. A column in the *Arizona Republic* November 24 states, “We’ve educated these kids. . . Why not get something back from them as working, taxpaying adults?”

Many major papers have emphasized the benefits of the Dream Act for the U.S. military, carrying out wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that are not widely popular. The *New York Times* in an editorial said, “The Defense Department, at least understands” the value of undocumented youth for maintaining a “mission-ready, all-volunteer force.” A November 18 article in the *Miami Herald* featured Miami Dade College student José Salcedo, who said he hopes to become a U.S. citizen if the Dream Act is passed. “I would love to join the military,” Salcedo said. “And once I come back I would like to run for public office.”

Fighting for the Dream Act is often seen as a step toward winning legalization for others who are undocumented. But tying the fate of immigrant workers to the goals of U.S. imperialism and its combat forces is understood by many workers and supporters of immigrant rights as a dead end.

Attempts to draw the fight in this direction runs counter to the demand on the U.S. government for legalization, without conditions, and the uncompromising slogan “We are workers, not criminals” placed on banners and placards and chanted at scores of actions for immigrant rights over the past several years.

A new book by Fidel Castro

### Por todos los caminos de la Sierra La victoria estratégica



Fidel Castro’s *Strategic Victory*, an account of 74 days of battle in the summer of 1958, where 300 revolutionary combatants, supported by workers and farmers all over Cuba, defeated the “final offensive” of 10,000 Batista troops. Over 80 pages of photos, maps, and illustrations. 855 pages. Available in Spanish at this time. \$35

Publisher: Publications Office of the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba

Available from a distributor on page 8 or:

**www.pathfinderpress.com**



# Joint military exercises threaten North Korea

BY CINDY JAQUITH

November 30—Washington and Seoul opened provocative military maneuvers November 28 in the West Sea, led by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS *George Washington*, just miles off the coast of North Korea. These are the largest such joint military exercises ever in the West Sea, according to the South Korean daily *Chosun Ilbo*.

The threatening exercises came less than a week after U.S.–South Korean exercises on the island of Yeonpyeong led to the first land-based exchange of artillery fire between North and South Korea since the end of the Korean War in 1953. Two South Korean soldiers and two civilians were killed by artillery fire from North Korea.

According to the U.S. Navy, the West Sea exercises include a guided-missile carrier, three guided missile destroyers, scores of fighter jets, and more than 7,000 troops. The war games will last four days and feature “surface warfare readiness training.”

Such provocations in the Korean Peninsula have taken place for decades, ever since workers and peasants in the north

of Korea carried out a socialist revolution following World War II. Washington invaded Korea in 1950 to turn that revolution back, but failed. The U.S. government has kept the country divided into North and South Korea since and has 28,000 troops in the South.

When the Korean War ended in 1953, the United Nations unilaterally declared the Northern Limit Line to be a mere three nautical miles from North Korea’s coast and also designated five islands near that line as South Korean territory, guaranteeing future conflicts would break out. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) has called for a demarcation line of 12 nautical miles from North Korean shores, the norm internationally.

The North and South Korean navies have clashed three times in these waters since 1999. Last March the South Korean warship *Cheonan* was blown up, killing 46 sailors, during joint exercises with the U.S. military. Seoul blamed the DPRK, but Pyongyang denied responsibility.

Washington has used severe economic sanctions as well as military muscle



U.S. Navy Photo/Lt. Jared Apollo Burgamy

USS *Hawaii* attack submarine arrives in Busan, South Korea, November 10.

to try to get the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons program. Although the U.S. government succeeded in winning North Korean acceptance of a plan to end the program in 2007, the talks broke down when Washington failed to live up to its part of the bargain, which included normalization of relations and delivering much-needed fuel to North Korea. Pyongyang recently announced that it has resumed uranium enrichment.

Washington is now leaning on the government of China to bring the DPRK to heel. Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman

of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, urged Beijing to take the lead in demanding compliance from the DPRK. “The one country that has influence in Pyongyang is China,” he said in a November 24 interview on ABC’s “The View.”

Beijing issued a statement November 28 stating its opposition to the U.S.–South Korean maneuvers being carried out without its consent. It called for talks between North Korea and the governments of South Korea, the United States, Japan, Russia, and China. Chinese officials also met with government representatives of both Seoul and Pyongyang.

Rather than accept Beijing’s proposal for talks, the U.S., Japanese, and South Korean governments announced they would hold talks in Washington in early December.

Some 10,000 South Korean cops, veterans, and others demonstrated in Seoul November 29 to demand retaliation against the North. Seoul announced it would toughen its rules of engagement with North Korea and reinforce weaponry on Yeonpyeong. But the government backed down on resuming live-fire drills on Yeonpyeong four hours after announcing they would take place.

An editorial in the North Korean paper *Rodong Sinmun* said that the DPRK’s uranium enrichment “will be pushed harder” to meet the country’s energy needs. “It would be a miscalculation if the U.S. and the South Korean warlike forces attempt to astound and pressure us by deploying a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.”

## Food price inflation rises sharply in China

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Working people in China face a sharp rise in food prices and housing costs that the government fears could lead to labor strikes and other protests.

The inflation rate jumped to 4.4 percent in October, the government announced, and food price inflation reached an annual level of 10.1 percent. Workers in China spend as much as 50 percent of their income on food, compared to between 10 percent and 20 percent in working-class households in advanced industrial countries.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs estimates 81 million Chinese will need food rations this year. Inflation is hitting the population in a differentiated manner. Food prices went up at an annual rate of 5 percent in Beijing in September, while they soared nearly 12 percent in Urumqi in the far northwest of the country.

Inflation was an issue in two recent strikes in the industrial city of Shenzhen in the Pearl River Delta, where prices

are relatively high. Workers at Brother Industries walked out for four days until the company agreed to a 100-yuan monthly raise and a reduction in the line speed (1 yuan = US 15 cents). At a Sanyo plant a strike erupted in early November after the company quadrupled prices in the cafeteria. The workers, mostly women, also drew attention to their wages being half to two-thirds of what male workers make.

Fearing social unrest, the Chinese government announced November 17 it would provide food subsidies for those with the lowest incomes, release stockpiles of food and fuel, and aggressively pursue merchants hoarding food.

Premier Wen Jiabao also threatened price controls, and officials in some local areas placed caps on some vegetable prices. When the government imposed price controls in 2008, however, whole-

sale food prices still went up 17 percent.

When the Chinese government began turning away from a planned economy in the late 1970s in favor of employing capitalist market methods it achieved what some considered a “miracle” in rapid economic growth, based on exports and foreign investment.

A drop in exports as a result of the U.S. financial crisis and worldwide capitalist depression led to the layoffs of millions of workers in China in 2008 and early 2009. While China’s growth rate rapidly recovered, the “miracle” is waning. An op-ed column on Bloomberg News Service October 20 said, “Awash in luxury cars, condos and expensive jewelry, the Chinese are enjoying what looks to be an unstoppable boom. But inflation figures . . . should give pause to those who assume China’s economy is on sound footing.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 13, 1985

Chanting “Down with the killer,” 3,000 people demonstrated outside the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, December 2. The demonstration marked the anniversary of the deadly gas leak that killed more than 2,000 people a year ago.

In addition to those killed, at least 200,000 people were injured when a poisonous gas, methyl isocyanate, leaked from an underground storage tank in the U.S.-owned Union Carbide plant.

Union officials at the Bhopal plant pointed out at the time of the gas leak that the disaster was the result of the “total apathy and negligence” of the company and the Indian government. The workers, they said, had warned the company many times of the need to improve the safety conditions in the plant. But Union Carbide did nothing.



December 12, 1960

Is the American economy experiencing a “moderate decline,” a “rolling adjustment,” or a plain old-fashioned recession? It all depends on who you are. If you are a banker, an industrial tycoon or a stockjobber, the more delicate expression will be preferred. If you are a worker in the growing army of partially employed or totally unemployed it will be the latter.

Like other bad news, the figures on October unemployment were released only after the elections. “In October,” reports the Dec. 3 *New York Times*, “the ranks of the jobless increased to 3,579,000 and in November the number probably increased to well above 4,000,000. This,” adds the *Times*, “means that the percentage of the total labor force looking for work is close to a post-World War II high.”



December 14, 1935

New York anti-Fascists are called upon to demonstrate before Madison Square Garden Saturday, Dec. 14 at 7 P.M. against the openly proclaimed threat of Mussolini’s American agents to arouse sympathy for his highway-robbery in Ethiopia and to terrorize all Italo-American and American opponents of the Italian Fascist murder regime.

This demonstration is being organized by the Italian-American Committee Against War and Fascism, a united front body. The Workers Party is participating in the demonstration.

The leaflet by the committee [says], “The Italian Fascists are going to meet in Madison Square Garden this Saturday night for the purpose of glorifying Mussolini’s aggression of Ethiopia and to raise funds.” Everybody out. Give the Fascist vermin the answer they deserve.

New International no. 12

### Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes



Today’s sharpening interimperialist conflicts are fueled by the opening stages of what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point and draw satisfaction from being “in their face” as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

*pathfinderpress.com*



# ‘Share experiences and learn from these books’

## Thirst for working-class politics at Venezuela fair

BY BETSEY STONE

CARACAS, Venezuela—“I’m glad you’re here. We need to share experiences and learn from these books,” Jesús Solé, a worker at an agricultural tool company, told volunteers at the Pathfinder Press stand at the Sixth Venezuela International Book Fair.

Solé was one of thousands of workers, students, and others who visited the booth between November 12 and 21, many coming more than once, to talk and buy books. During the 10-day period, a total of 1,839 books were sold.

The top selling book, which also sparked the most discussion, was *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, of which 277 copies were sold.

Those who staffed the stand were communist workers from the United States and the United Kingdom. This was of interest to many, who listened as Pathfinder volunteers explained that they sold the books in the factories where they work, in workers’ districts, universities, at protests, and on picket lines. Many were surprised to learn that the effects of the capitalist economic crisis on working people in the United States has generated marked interest there in books that promote the perspective of the working class taking power.

One of those who bought the *Workers Power* book was Ender Heresa, an Afro-Venezuelan construction worker who came to the booth several times on his break. He was drawn to the many photos in the book of working-class struggles in the United States.

The second best seller was *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, with 146 sold. In third place was *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters, with 130 sold. Pointing to the book, readers would ask volunteers at the stand, “Do you think workers in the United States can make a revolution?” They wanted to know what the conditions of U.S. workers are today. Several visitors had attended the five-day rolling debate at the 2007 Venezuela book fair that inspired this title.

Other commonly asked questions were why the Republicans gained ground in the recent U.S. elections, what

the development of the tea party registered, and whether communist workers face repression selling revolutionary books and copies of the *Militant*.

Pathfinder volunteers described the growing disgust among workers, farmers, and youth toward politicians of both the Republican and Democratic parties, who have nothing to offer but high unemployment, cutbacks, wars, and repression of workers rights.

On the last day of the fair, an interview with Steve Warshell, one of the volunteers who staffed the Pathfinder stand, appeared in the newspaper *CiudadCCS*, with the headline, “Is a Revolution Possible in the U.S.” Warshell, recent Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress in Texas, explained that yes, a revolution is possible if working people are able to build a revolutionary party that can advance working-class struggles, unite the class, and chart a path toward taking power.

### World economic depression

As in the past couple of years, the world economic depression was on the minds of many. Of the 191 copies of *Nueva Internacional* sold, the top seller was issue number 6, which features the article, “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun” by Barnes.

Just before the fair opened, the Caracas daily *El Universal* reported that the price of food has risen 33.7 percent in the past year, while overall inflation is a hefty 23 percent. On several different days public hospital nurses, who have organized walkouts and other protests demanding wage increases to keep up with inflation, came to the booth to purchase books and talk about their fight.

Eighty-one copies of Pathfinder’s new edition of *Lenin’s Final Fight* were sold, as well as 244 copies of the *Militant* and 144 copies of the *Militant* supplement that includes the introduction to *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

Gustavo García, who works at Avila



Militant/Arnold Weissberg

Construction workers visit Pathfinder booth at Venezuela International Book Fair

TV, a channel run by young people, was one of those who bought the supplement, read it, and then came back to buy the book.

During the fair Avila TV featured a program aimed at exposing racism in the media. “Because most people here are of mixed race, there is the idea that racism doesn’t exist in Venezuela,” García explained. “But our language is full of racist references. For example, people will say a person has a ‘good appearance’ if they are lighter skinned.”

This is the sixth consecutive year Pathfinder Press has had a booth at the Venezuela International Book Fair. Many returning visitors were familiar with Pathfinder, having bought books in previous years.

Arnaldo Rojas, a bank worker, said he first became acquainted with Pathfinder in 2001 at the International Youth Festival in Algeria. He and some of his friends have been reading and discussing Pathfinder books, he said, and he has introduced the books to other workers at the bank. This year he purchased three issues of *Nueva Internacional*, toward completing his set of all eight volumes.

Andrea Canave, a student who traveled to the fair from the nearby city of Carabobo, first learned about Pathfinder when a friend gave her *Their Trotsky and Ours* by Barnes. She came looking for titles advertised in that book, leaving with *The Communist Manifesto* and

several titles on the Cuban Revolution.

The sale of 84 copies of *Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara, along with other women’s liberation titles, reflected the increased numbers of women in Venezuela who are demanding more rights, including legalization of abortion. Sixty-five copies of *Abortion Is a Woman’s Right* by Pat Grogan were picked up.

The Sankara title was one of 10 books bought by María Ramírez, a student at Bolivarian University of Venezuela. “My family tried to pressure me to stay at home, cooking and cleaning, the traditional women’s role,” she said. “But I wanted more in life.” Now she is working, studying, and active in student struggles.

Pathfinder volunteers frequently participated in panel discussions and book presentations, some on women’s liberation themes, which took place daily in large tents throughout the fair.

In addition, those attending the fair enjoyed concerts and dance performances, where groups presented the music, costumes, and dance of the countries honored by this year’s fair—Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico—as well as poetry readings, films, and children’s workshops.

Maggie Trowe contributed to this article.

## Conference discusses African politics, history

BY JIM ALTENBERG

SAN FRANCISCO—Some 1,500 professors, students, and others gathered here November 18–21 at the 53rd African Studies Association annual meeting to discuss African politics, culture, and history.

The conference theme “African Dispora and Disaporas in Africa” reflected the growing integration of Africa into the world capitalist market, which has led to the expanded growth of communities of Africans in countries throughout the world. The activities of African migrants, their relations with their home countries, and their place in international politics were taken up in many presentations. These ranged from the Somali communities in the United States, to the expanding commercial and investment activities by the Chinese government in many parts of the continent, and the upcoming referendum in southern Sudan on secession.

Other panels discussed the chang-

ing place of women in African societies, and growing immigration of working people.

A “special presentation” by Johnnie Carson, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Africa, was part of a substantial presence by representatives of the U.S. government at the conference. He commended the African Studies Association for the help its scholars provide to Washington in understanding Africa, in formulating policy, and in recruiting young students into the ranks of Washington’s diplomatic corps. A few people challenged Carson in a question period following his speech, particularly about the activities of U.S. oil companies and capitalist financial institutions such as the World Bank.

The Pentagon’s recently formed Africa Command (AFRICOM) organized a panel aimed at expanding the collaboration of Africa scholars and social scientists with the U.S. military in Africa.

While there was little discussion in conference sessions about the economic crisis and depression conditions spreading across the globe, a team of socialist workers found a great deal of interest among conference participants in Pathfinder books, both about Africa and on broader political questions.

Fourteen copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* were sold, as well as 10 books by Thomas Sankara, leader of the 1983–87 revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso. Books on the Cuban Revolution, and the internationalist work of Cuban volunteers in Angola, Equatorial Guinea, and the Congo, were also picked up. Altogether participants bought 44 titles totaling nearly \$600.

Pathfinder was one of 39 publishers, book distributors, and others from the United States, the United Kingdom, and South Africa that set up booths in the conference exhibit hall.

Recommended reading

### Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

A necessary debate

By Mary-Alice Waters

“To think that a socialist revolution in the U.S. is not possible you would have to believe not only that the ruling families of the imperialist countries and their economic wizards have found a

way to ‘manage’ capitalism. You would also have to close your eyes to the spreading imperialist wars, civil wars, and economic, financial, and social crises we are in the midst of.” —\$7

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# Socialists from U.S. meet with Venezuelan workers

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CAGUA, Aragua, Venezuela—Three communist workers from the United States met with factory workers here November 16 during a two-day visit to the state of Aragua just west of the capital, Caracas. We were in Venezuela helping to staff Pathfinder Press’s stand at the Venezuela International Book Fair.

The exchange was organized by Carolina Alvarez, the local director of the Book and Reading Platform, a state institution that distributes books and promotes reading. Alvarez explained that she had gotten to know Pathfinder at book fairs over the years and wanted to bring some of the political perspective it promotes to Aragua.

In the small city of Cagua we met with more than two dozen workers at Agropatria, a company that produces fertilizers and insecticides. It formerly was called Agroisleña and was nationalized by the government in early October.

Róger Calero, a box factory worker on our team, opened the meeting. “Pathfinder’s commitment is to keep in print the lessons of the last 150 years of struggles of the workers movement. These books are tools to fight more effectively,” he said. “We use these books in our workplaces in the United States to advance building a revolutionary party and transforming our unions into instruments of struggle.”

Calero described the impact of the capitalist economic crisis on working people in the United States and explained that it is “a product of the normal workings of capitalism.”

John Hawkins, a glass factory worker and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Chicago, described some of the activity communist workers carry out in the United States today.

Their brief presentations were followed by more than an hour of discussion. One worker commented, “From what I’m hearing the reality in the United States is not so different from our situation. The conditions and wages are precarious, and so is safety. Why does the United States allow the violation of laws in regard to workers’ safety?”

“Workers are the only ones who can ensure safety on the job, and we have to use union power to be effective,” Calero responded. “There are laws on the books, and the government sometimes passes even stricter safety laws, but capitalists in the United States like everywhere else their system holds sway, always put their profits first, ahead of workers’ safety and the environment.”

## Workers discuss conditions

During the meeting and in discussions afterward, a number of Venezuelan workers described conditions on the job. One big issue is the company’s use of temporary workers. Marcos Olivares, a 31-year-old production worker, said that under current labor law, workers with 90 days on the job can’t be fired without cause. Often, however, bosses fire temporary workers before they complete the 90 days, and then “rehire” them for different temporary jobs.

“We want this to end,” agreed Oscar Andrade, 32, a production worker with four years at the company. The Venezuelan workers were a bit surprised

to hear how familiar this sounded to workers from the United States.

Safety is a big concern. Workers said dangerous working conditions and environmental pollution at Agroisleña’s operations were widely known. José Leje, a batch maker who mixes pesticides, pointed to one toxic chemical that is “dangerous even when you wear all of the protective gear.” Workers are seeking to limit their exposure to this chemical to three hours a day.

Luis Cortes, 38, said he was on medical leave for a year after a product spilled on him. He and others seemed hopeful that the nationalization will lead to an improvement in these conditions.

The government declared in early October that it was taking over Agroisleña. Workers learned about the nationalization on the news or when they arrived at work the next day. Like other recent nationalizations, this one took the form of the government buying out the previous owners, with a 90-day transition period. The bought-out bosses promised to pay workers for 90 days and said they didn’t have to work, in effect trying to sabotage production. While some workers at the company opposed the government takeover, most who spoke in the meeting supported it.

## Building a working-class leadership

Another theme of the discussion at Agropatria was the perspective of building a working-class leadership. Leje commented, “I agree capitalism is in crisis, but it is not going to die by itself.” The bosses “have the ability to regenerate their system.”

“Workers and farmers here have made some advances in recent years,” Hawkins said, “most important of all



Militant Rodolfo Pérez (right) introduces Socialist Workers Party members from United States (foreground) to evening class of workers at Bolivarian University in Cagua, Aragua, Venezuela.

in becoming more confident and conscious of workers’ potential. You can bet the capitalists here and in North America do not like it one bit. When working people make gains, we have to prepare to defend them.”

Citing the example of the Cuban Revolution and encouraging everyone to read *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*, Calero described how the Cuban toilers took and held state power. “Workers need to not only take control of the factory,” Calero said. “Everywhere we need a mass revolutionary movement such as that in Cuba, which was able wrest power from the capitalists and replace their state with one run by workers and farmers; carry through an extensive expropriation of land, industry, and banking; and decisively take away their means to exploit us.”

The following day we met with students and teachers at two campuses of the Bolivarian University. One of these was a night class composed of workers taking university classes in buildings used as primary and secondary schools during the day.

Students at the Bolivarian University

also were interested in politics in the United States. One student asked, “How is it possible that you’re speaking so much about racism in the United States when there’s a Black president. Isn’t he doing something about racism?”

Hawkins replied that the mass struggles by Black workers and farmers made gains that have permanently strengthened the possibilities to unify the working class, fight for power, and open the door to eradicating racism and all other forms of oppression. At the same time, a significant layer of Blacks has become part of the middle classes, and a number part of the capitalist ruling class. The parasitic social layer that Obama is part of is bourgeois in its class interests, values, and world outlook. His government cannot and will not do anything to improve the condition that the overwhelming majority of Black toilers face today.

At each meeting, participants took advantage of the opportunity to get Pathfinder books that were brought from the book fair. Overall sales totaled 60 books, including 15 copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

# White House to freeze wages of gov’t workers

## Continued from front page

the government would be \$5 billion over two years, but because in future years federal workers’ salaries would begin at a lower base, workers will lose \$28 billion over five years.

At his press conference, Obama reminded reporters, “From the earliest days of my administration, we’ve worked to eliminate wasteful spending and streamline government. I promised to go through the budget line by line to eliminate programs that have outlived their usefulness.” His administration has already ended or curtailed 121 programs, many of which benefit working people in one way or another.

Editorials in major dailies backed the move. “The symbolic effect of showing that government can discipline itself is . . . important,” said the *Washington Post*. “In an era that will call for shared sacrifice, when governors and county executives are freezing pay and furloughing workers and many private-sector employees have lost their jobs, it’s not unreasonable to expect federal workers to bear a share.”

Pitting public workers against those with private employers, the *Wall Street Journal* applauded Obama’s actions “as a small but symbolic first step toward reining in a ballooning federal payroll that is a slap at the non-govern-

ment workers who pay the bills.”

The *Journal*, however, called on Obama to make his pay freeze an “opening bid” in a campaign of austerity and layoffs directed at government workers.

“I never expected that this administration would look at this problem and think the solution was cutting wages,” said John Gage, president of the American Federation of Government Employees.

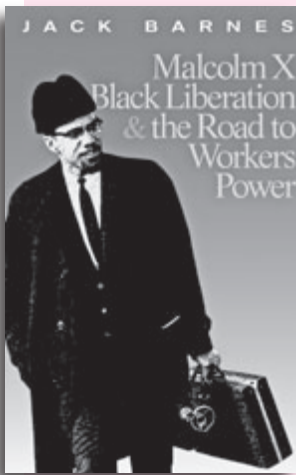
The announcement of a pay freeze for government workers comes at the same time that emergency federal assistance

for 2 million workers who have been unemployed long-term runs out. Nearly 42 percent of the 15 million without jobs across the United States have been without jobs for six months or longer. By official figures there is one job opening for every five workers unemployed.

Workers face lower wages, speedup, layoffs, and benefits cuts. Meanwhile, the U.S. Federal Reserve Board added another \$600 billion into the banking system earlier this month to ensure bankers and bondholders maintain their profit margins.

## Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes



“This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States—from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today—and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution. . . .”

\$20

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# Blacks confront segregated armed forces in WWII

*Below is an excerpt from Blacks in America's Wars by Robert W. Mullen, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. The book traces changing attitudes of African Americans toward service in the U.S. military, from the Revolutionary War through the Vietnam War. The piece below describes the racist conditions Blacks faced during World War II and the refusal of the government to end segregation in the armed forces. It also describes initial steps taken in the midst of the war to organize protest actions against these conditions. Copyright © 1973 by Robert W. Mullen. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.*

BY ROBERT W. MULLEN

Blacks entered the Second World War with mixed emotions. They were going to defend the United States, a country just as influenced by racist ideology as Germany, a country where lynchings had become so commonplace and so

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

much an accepted part of American life that an anti-lynching bill could not be passed in Congress, a country where the rate of lynchings during the years of the Roosevelt administration had risen to one per week. . . .

In January 1941, A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping



Black troops line up at segregated mess hall at Army Air Corps base in Florida in 1943

Car Porters, announced plans for a March on Washington on July 1, 1941, to protest discrimination in war industry employment and segregation in the armed forces. He predicted that between 50,000 and 100,000 Blacks would participate in the demonstration.

The call for a March on Washington was received with great enthusiasm by Blacks all over the country, and thousands began to work on the campaign and make preparations to demonstrate. It also caused great consternation in government circles. Government officials kept asking "What will Berlin say?"—to which Blacks could reply that they were more interested about what Berlin would say about America's racist policies.

As the date for the March on Washington approached, the government put great pressure on Randolph to call off the demonstration. Eleanor Roosevelt and Fiorello La Guardia were sent to meet with him and try to coax him into canceling it. President Franklin D. Roosevelt called him to Washington to meet with him in hopes of securing his agreement to drop the plan.

In the discussions Roosevelt refused to consider desegregating the armed forces but agreed to issue an executive order forbidding discrimination in war industries. One week before the march was scheduled to take place, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802, the Fair

Employment Practices order, and Randolph, despite objections from some in his movement who wanted to hold out for desegregation of the armed forces as well, agreed to call off the march. . . .

Many Afro-Americans took advantage of the war to tie their racial demands to the ideology for which the war was supposedly being fought. The Black press frequently compared the similarity of American treatment of Blacks and the Nazis' treatment of minorities, the white-supremacist doctrine in America and the master-race doctrine in Germany. Stimulated by the "democratic ideology of the war," Blacks increasingly were moved to reexamine their position in society. They found it simply too difficult to reconcile their treatment with the announced war aims.

As one observer put it: "The hypocrisy and paradox involved in fighting a world war for the four freedoms and against aggression by an enemy preaching a master race ideology, while at the same time upholding racial segregation . . . could not be overlooked. The war crisis provided American Negroes a unique opportunity to point out, for all to see, the difference between the American creed and practice. . . ."

The refusal of the government and armed forces to end official segregation was one of the conditions that most disturbed Blacks during the war. On October 9, 1940, the White House

issued a policy statement which refused to abandon the principle of segregation in the armed forces.

As the war progressed, the emotional impact of this issue grew. The hypocrisy involved in setting up a segregated army to fight an enemy with a master-race ideology was apparent to all Black troops. One result was that Blacks, on the average, "tended to show less enthusiasm for the war than did whites, and manifested somewhat greater reluctance to go overseas or to enter combat." One group of young Blacks in Chicago formed a group called the "Conscientious Objectors Against Jim Crow" in 1941 and urged others to resist the draft because of the segregation in the armed forces.

The tenacity with which the armed forces maintained segregation, and the contortions it sometimes had to go through to coordinate the efforts of two separate armies—one white and one Black—suggested to many Blacks that the maintenance of segregation seemed more important to the army and the country as a whole than victory over the enemy.

Racial violence flared up at virtually every post in the United States and abroad when Black GIs tried to use the normally superior facilities allotted to white GIs—entertainment, post exchanges, etc. Race riots took place at such places as Ft. Bragg, Camp Robinson, Camp Davis, Camp Lee, and Ft. Dix during the war.

Black doubts about the value of fighting a war between two white-supremacist countries were increased by widely publicized incidents in which Black GIs in the South were refused service at restaurants that willingly served German prisoners of war.

The growing shortage of manpower in 1943 led to a change in the army's policy towards Black units. Pressure to commit some Black combat units to battle began to build within the War Department in 1943. Additionally, a drastic shortage of infantry replacements as a result of the Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944–45 persuaded General Eisenhower that Black troops should be allowed to volunteer as infantry replacements in white companies. Those who did volunteer were assigned to white units and participated in the fighting in Germany in 1945.

December

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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by Robert Mullen

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8 The Militant December 13, 2010



# Who's sharing in the sacrifice?

"Shared sacrifice." The capitalists and their governments, from Ireland to the United States, are preaching these words to workers as they cut our pay, shrink our pensions, and eliminate jobs. The latest is President Barack Obama, who said, "All of us are called to make some sacrifices" as he announced a two-year pay freeze for more than 2 million federal employees.

Every time the capitalists hit a downturn in their profits, they try to get us to see their problems as our problems. "We" have to figure out how to work faster for less money so "our" company can compete better against rivals abroad. "We" have to make "tough decisions" about the budget deficit. But it's not "our" deficit.

Recently, the bosses at General Motors celebrated the fact that the company made \$1.9 billion in profits last quarter. The automaker's "recovery" has come at the cost of tens of thousands of jobs, wage cuts of up to 50 percent, and speedup on the assembly line. Where's the "shared sacrifice"?

Now the White House and Congress want to extend this, saying, "Sacrifice must be shared by the employees of the federal government. After all, small busi-

nesses and families are tightening their belts." The bosses and their politicians always try to pit workers against one another, to disguise the real source of the problem—the profit system. They tell us federal workers are greedy because they get a cost-of-living-allowance, health insurance, and pensions. Unionized workers are to blame; they're too highly paid and the boss can't arbitrarily fire them. The elderly are driving up the cost of Social Security—they're living too long!

What working people need is not more "sacrifice"—we need jobs, quality housing, education, health care, and secure retirements. The capitalist system is proving itself less and less capable of providing these basic needs even as worker productivity is higher than ever. Capitalist governments are increasingly detached from the reality of everyday life for working people as they scramble to bail out banks and big corporations on the backs of our labor.

Workers need a revolution in this country that mobilizes millions of working people in a struggle to end exploitation, racial oppression, wars, and environmental degradation that the capitalist system perpetuates; and begin the fight for a socialist world.

# U.S. aerial drone strikes in Pakistan

**Continued from front page**

for Taliban and other armed Islamist groups, which were propped up by the Pakistani rulers to bolster Islamabad's influence in Afghanistan and the broader region, as well as to counter movements of national minorities within Pakistan.

Kareem Khan, a journalist from the tribal agency of North Waziristan, has threatened to sue U.S. military and CIA officials for a Dec. 31, 2009, drone strike that killed his 18-year-old son, his brother, and a mason who was staying in his house. News reports at the time claimed that three "militants" or "extremists" were killed.

With his lawyer at his side, Khan announced at a press conference in Islamabad November 29 that he would file suit in Pakistani court unless he received compensation from Washington. "We are not terrorists, we are common citizens," he said.

The Pakistani government is publicly critical of the unpopular U.S. strikes, often demanding the drones be put under Pakistani control. But the drones reportedly operate from bases in both Afghanistan and Pakistan with the aid of Pakistani intelligence.

Under tacit agreement with Islamabad, the U.S. drones are confined to parts of the tribal areas. But Washington has renewed pressure to expand the strikes to include an area around Quetta, the provincial capital of Baluchistan where U.S. officials contend the top leadership council of the Afghan Taliban is based.

The Pakistani government has rejected the request to expand the drone strikes. Quetta is a major city of 900,000 and home to many Afghan refugees. Civilian casualties and destruction could be considerable and within easier reach of the media.

The province of Baluchistan is also home to the Baluchi people, an oppressed minority in Pakistan and Iran fighting for national rights. The Pakistani government has promised to address Baluchi grievances in an effort to stabilize the area and bring an end to decades of guerrilla war. Washington's "short-term goals should not be our long-term pain," a Pakistani military official recently told the *Washington Post*, explaining opposition to expanding the strikes.

## Correction

A November 22 *Militant* article on the Cuba in Revolution photo exhibit noted there are photos by more than 30 photographers, including Cuban-born Luis Korda, Raúl Corrales, Constantino Arias, and Osvaldo Salas.

The article should have noted that a large number of photos by Alberto Korda, who is famous for a 1960 photograph of Che Guevara, were also featured. Alberto and Luis, who are not related, set up a gallery together before the revolution, and both decided to take the last name of Korda.

The Pakistani government has, however, agreed to increased CIA presence in Quetta, where covert missions are conducted jointly with Pakistani military intelligence "almost on a daily basis," Pakistan's top intelligence official told the *Washington Post*. Pakistani foreign ministry spokesman Abdul Basit denied the CIA expansion in Quetta.

The Pakistani military is currently conducting operations against antigovernment Taliban groups in five out of seven tribal agencies and the Swat Valley—operations that have resulted in untold civilians casualties and displacement of hundreds of thousands over the last couple years.

During a "strategic dialog" in Pakistan in October in which Washington pledged \$2 billion in military aid, Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Pakistan's top military commander had committed to open an additional front in North Waziristan. But Pakistani officials currently maintain they will not launch any operations there until other areas are "stabilized," which they say will take at least four to six months.

Meanwhile, reports of incursions into Pakistan by U.S.-NATO helicopters based in Afghanistan are becoming more frequent. Gunships opened fire November 26 in a village a few miles into North Waziristan wounding at least three people, according to Pakistani news sources.



U.S. Air Force/Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse  
Maj. Rick Wageman operates virtual cockpit of Predator drone Oct. 25, 2008, from base in southern Afghanistan.

# Protests in Ireland

**Continued from front page**

Irish prime minister Brian Cowen "is ripping this society apart. He's destroying this country to protect the banks. I'm already struggling. I'm mad because I work for a health service and I've seen a health service being dismantled."

The government's National Recovery Plan aims to reduce Ireland's budget deficit to below 3 percent from 12 percent by 2014, and it places the burden of doing so squarely on the backs of the working-class majority already hammered by cuts and tax rises brought in since 2008.

The new measures include: reducing the minimum wage by one euro to 7.65 euros an hour (one euro=US\$1.32); a 3 billion euro cut in the social wage over the next four years, including raising the working age to qualify for the state pension to 68 by 2028; an increase in value added (sales) taxes from 21 percent to 23 percent and their possible extension to basic food items and children's clothing; and public sector job cuts of some 25,000, in a country where the official jobless rate stands at 13.6 percent already, more than double the rate two years ago.

The government plans to introduce an immediate 10 percent cut in the pay of all new public sector workers. The 124,000 retired public sector workers will also see their pensions cut.

At the same time, corporate taxes are to remain unchanged at the low rate of 12.5 percent. Prime Minister Cowen said, "A low rate of corporation tax has been a cornerstone of our industrial policy since the 1950s and . . . is now part of our international brand."

## 'Banks are bailed out, pensions wiped out'

Handmade placards carried by demonstrators reflected the impact these anti-working-class measures will have. "If people aren't working, it's hurting"; "Still turning the corner, from bad to worse"; and "Banks are bailed out, pensions wiped out" were among the signs.

Mariead Hayes, chairperson of the Irish Senior Citizens organization, told *Militant* reporters how older people are being affected. "Last year they did away with the Christmas fuel bonus, which represented 2 percent of our pension," she said. "This year they have introduced prescription fees and a carbon tax and reduced optical and dental benefits. There will be further setbacks as our purchasing power goes down." Between 15,000 and 30,000 people also face house repossession next year, as they fail to meet a new threshold: being able to pay at least 66 percent of the monthly interest on their mortgages.

An 85 billion euro bailout loan package for Ireland was agreed to by the European Union November 28. About a third of the money will go directly to Irish banks and the rest to day-to-day government spending. The Irish government itself will contribute 17.5 billion euros to the rescue package. The package is contingent on Irish government moves to strengthen its banking system; reduce workers' wages, working conditions and benefits; and raise taxes.

The Fianna Fáil–Green Party coalition government has already split over the crisis, with the Greens withdrawing from the government, though they have pledged to ensure the budget passes on December 7. This will mean a national election in the new year. Fianna Fáil lost a by-election in late November in Donegal to Sinn Féin, their share of the vote falling from 50 percent in the 2007 general election to 21 percent and leaving the coalition with a majority of just two.

All the opposition parties say they will vote against the budget, though none proposes any road forward for working people. The labor officialdom is also firmly mired in saving capitalism. ICTU president Jack O'Connor promoted the slogan heading up the November 27 march: "There is a better, fairer way." O'Connor told the rally, "The time frame for the economic adjustment is too short. It should be extended to 2017."

John Douglas, general secretary of Mandate, the main union for retail workers, said the protest was justified as its members on minimum wage faced a pay cut. "People need an occasion to vent their angst about what's happening," he said.

Caroline Bellamy contributed to this article.